

# MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN PLAN

## Catalytic Projects



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## Introduction

Throughout the preparation of the downtown plan, the consultants and sponsors sought to identify projects that would implement key aspects of the plan and would spur activity, investment and redevelopment. Because these projects are expected to produce additional benefits, they are called catalytic projects. The plan includes thirteen catalytic projects. The catalytic projects are divided into two groups. The first ten are phase one projects that are continuing or short-term priorities – projects that have been started and should continue or projects that should begin immediately but which may take time to accomplish fully. The phase two projects are contingency projects – important sites that may become available in the next one to two years. The plan suggests redevelopment concepts for these sites that are consistent with the overall plan.

Not surprisingly, given their common purpose, the catalytic projects support each other and it is helpful to view them together. For this reason, a brief overview of the projects is provided in this introduction. A more detailed description of each project follows in the second part of this report. The detailed descriptions include the rationale for each project and identify the parties in the public and private sectors that should participate in the project's implementation.



## Phase 1 - Mixed Use Sites



### ***East and West Wisconsin Avenue Revitalization***

The revitalization of Wisconsin Avenue is of strategic importance to the Downtown renaissance. The corridor from the Library to O'Donnell Park is both the gateway to and Main Street of Downtown. The street has two personalities. On the east side of the river are Milwaukee's premier office addresses. The west side is the retail equivalent and convention center. The Plan proposes improvements to the streetscape that include sidewalk and crosswalk enhancements; street trees, pedestrian lighting, and street furniture. It proposes the revitalization of the ground floor retail on the avenue, including the Grand Avenue.



### ***Historic Third Ward Public Market District***

The Third Ward, with the Commission Row Buildings, is Milwaukee's historic produce market. The Plan proposes a new district, focusing on a public market, which revitalizes this tradition. Downtown is under-served by grocery stores. The much needed public market will feature local farmers in indoor and outdoor stalls. These offerings will be enhanced with specialty food and craft items in stores and restaurants on the blocks within a five-minute walk of the public market.



### ***Park East Development***

Replacement of the elevated section of the Park East Freeway from 4th to Jefferson Streets with an improved street system will reclaim approximately 11 developable blocks. The development within this area will augment the successful Water Street entertainment district. The proposed development could include mixed-use residential buildings, an entertainment complex, a new square, a hotel, a parking structure and transit transfer building, and streetscape enhancements. Mixed-use river front buildings will center on a plaza that frames river views; ground level outdoor cafes will provide the choicest seats for viewing river activity or park activity.

## Phase 1 - Access and Public Realm

### ***The Transit Connector : The Downtown Trolley***

Many recent actions and projects are enhancing the success of Downtown Milwaukee. One of the most pressing challenges to Downtown is the need to provide better connections between primary Downtown attractions and meeting places.

The phasing of the County's long-range multi-modal transit plan begins with several rubber tire trolley lines. These will connect the primary activity generators in downtown to each other and to the surrounding neighborhoods.



### ***Park Once***

Through a managed system of street signage, parking deck signage and the transit system, the Park Once concept will allow visitors, residents and employees in downtown to park and not use their car again to move within downtown. This program begins with informational street signs directing motorists to vacant parking spaces. Decks are adjacent to transit stops. Street signs inform visitors of the distances to all activity generators.



### ***RiverWalk Completion***

The initial phases of the Downtown RiverWalk have been an extraordinary success. Several more sections are either currently under construction or about to begin soon. The Plan proposes continuing this success. The RiverWalk should be extended in front of the Union Station redevelopment project, if the Post Office site becomes available. The Plan also recommends that the walk be continued along Walkers Point, to complement the Third Ward walk. Finally, the Plan recommends that the Third Ward segment connect with the Lake Walk to enhance pedestrian access to the lake.



## Phase 1 - Access and Public Realm



### ***Lakefront Connections***

The Lake is Downtown's most dramatic physical feature. It provides extensive recreational opportunities. The plan recommends that pedestrian connections to the Lake be enhanced to more fully utilize this asset. At the northern end, the bluff precludes numerous access points. However, projects like Lake Bluff have provided an important civic contribution through the installation of a path down the bluff. Other opportunities must be sought. In the Third Ward there are more possibilities because of the flat terrain. The grid must be reconnected to ease pedestrian travel.



### ***Two-way Streets***

Visitors easily understand two-way streets. Two-way streets are more conducive to pedestrian activity and can result in higher traffic capacity. Consequently, the Plan recommends that as many streets as possible be converted to two way. This will be phased over time to accommodate a well-functioning system.



### ***West Kilbourn Avenue Streetscape Improvements***

Kilbourn Avenue performs an important civic function linking City Hall to the County Court House complex. The elevated County Court House creates a dramatic visual termination for Kilbourn Avenue. Significant streetscape enhancements are recommended to transform Kilbourn into a well-defined civic street.



### ***City Hall Square Intersection***

City Hall is the most identifiable building in Downtown. Improvements to the intersection at Wells and Water Streets are recommended including intersection paving and landscaping to better define and enhance this important space.



## Phase 2 - Contingency Projects

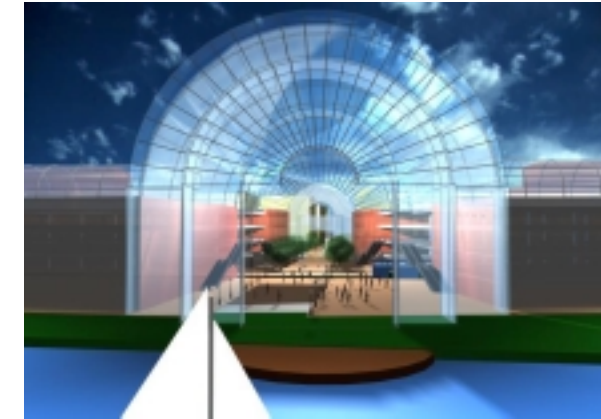
### ***The Pabst Brewery Complex Adaptive Reuse Project***

The Plan recommends that this recently vacated industrial complex be rehabilitated and reused. A possible range of uses includes light industrial, residential, live-work units, and offices.



### ***Union Station/Post Office Redevelopment***

This riverside project includes redevelopment of the post office and the train station into a mixed-use complex that includes a new train station, offices, retail, parking, multi-modal transfer station, regional bus depot and possibly housing. It could reconnect the downtown grid to the river in a series of dramatic streets/passageways.



### ***MacArthur Square***

This important civic space is underutilized. The plan recommends that the street structure be redesigned to allow vehicular access from 9th Street and short term parking around the re-landscaped square. A new building is recommended along with the design of a new grand stairway starting on 6th Street.

